

OMAHA, NE - Congressman Lee Terry (NE-02) hosted a Medicare education event with U.S. Secretary Mike Leavitt, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Omaha community leaders, and top Federal health officials.

The event raised awareness of the new Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage to benefit seniors, individuals with disabilities, and those qualifying for "extra help."

"This new Part D Prescription Drug benefit can provide significant savings to seniors and help meet the prescription drug needs of low income folks and people with disabilities," Terry said. "Every person now eligible for Medicare qualifies for this benefit regardless of income. It is a voluntary program and we need to educate our seniors

on how this drug benefit can improve their individual health needs. I encourage all seniors to learn as much as they can about the program before enrollment begins November 15th of this year."

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The event provided information and highlighted community-based resources that will help educate and enroll seniors and beneficiaries with disabilities in the new Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage.

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"The new prescription drug benefit is the most important change to Medicare in 40 years," HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt said. "That is why we have started a national conversation to raise awareness about this program in communities across the nation. Almost everyone knows a Medicare beneficiary -- we are asking people to talk to beneficiaries, to help them sign up and gain the peace of mind that Medicare will cover the prescription drugs needed to stay healthy. I am excited to join Congressman Terry and other Omaha leaders to begin this conversation in Omaha ."

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Congressman Terry will be joined by CMS employees for his next Medicare informative event.

WHAT: Medicare Educational Seminar

WHEN: Thursday, September 1, 2005, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m., CST

WHERE: Holiday Inn Central, 3321 S. 72 Street, Omaha, NE 68124

Background: Beginning January 1, 2006, prescription drug coverage will be available to all Americans with Medicare. Every person with Medicare - no matter how they get their health care today or whether they have existing drug coverage - will be eligible for drug coverage under a Medicare prescription drug plan. The drug plans will be available in all parts of the country, and will cover brand name and generic drugs. Prescriptions can be obtained from neighborhood pharmacies and through mail order.

All Medicare beneficiaries will have a choice of plans, so they can get the coverage that best meets their needs. They will need to make a decision soon about signing up for Medicare's new prescription drug coverage. This is part of a nationwide outreach effort to help eligible individuals make an informed decision. Enrollment is voluntary and begins November 15, 2005. Coverage begins January 1, 2006.

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